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DE RUEHML #1014 1310723
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 110723Z MAY 09
FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4080
INFO RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RULSDMK/DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHXS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHZU/ASIAN PACIFIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION
RHHMUNA/USPACOM HONOLULU HI//FPA//

UNCLAS MANILA 001014

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/MTS, EAP/EP/ EEB/IFD/OMA
STATE PASS EXIM, OPIC, AND USTR
STATE PASS USAID FOR AA/ANE, AA/EGAT, DAA/ANE
TREASURY FOR OASIA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EWWT](#) [ECON](#) [RP](#) [SO](#) [XW](#) [XE](#)

SUBJECT: Somali Pirates: Philippines thanks U.S. Navy

REF: MANILA 00846

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

1. (SBU) In a letter dated April 29, 2009 the Philippine Secretary for Transportation and Communications expressed gratitude for the U.S. assistance to a Philippine ship that Somali pirates released on April 21 (text in para 2). There are currently more than 80 Filipino seafarers held hostage by Somali pirates on board seven vessels. The fate of the seafarers remains an issue of deep public concern in the Philippines. In the instant case, soon after its release, the Philippine ship ran out of fuel off the eastern coast of Somalia. The United States Navy refueled the drifting ship, provided food and water for the crew, and escorted it to safety.

2. (SBU) Begin text of the letter:

Dear Secretary LaHood,

It is my pleasure to have met personally this morning Ms. Susan McDermott, Acting Assistant Secretary for Aviation and International Affairs and the rest of the members of the American delegation on the occasion of the Opening Day of the 6th APEC Transportation Ministerial Meeting in Manila from 27-29 April 2009. I am happy to see them here because the United States has been an important partner in advancing the work of the transportation sector in the APEC process.

I write to personally thank you and the American government for providing naval escort through the US Navy Ship, "T193- WALTERS' DEIHL" and her crew for the Philippine registered chemical tanker, "MT STOLT STRENGTH" together with her 23 Filipino seafarers, following her release from the hands of the Somali pirates on 21 April 2009. They were held in captivity for more than five (5) months.

Aside from providing naval escort within Somali waters, US naval ship "T193-WALTERS' DEIHL" also supplied "MT STOLT STRENGTH" with diesel and food and water for the crew. I personally thank you for all this great help and assistance.

As of 7:20 am today, MT STOLT STRENGTH" safely arrived in Salalah, Oman. Her crew will take their flight back to the Philippines in a few days.

Once again, thank you and I wish to reassure you and your Department of our continuing cooperation on issues of common and mutual interest.

(Signature)
End text of letter

Memmott